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**One Hundred Eighth Congress**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Select Committee on Homeland Security**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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June 25, 2004

The Honorable Clark Kent Ervin  
Inspector General  
Department of Homeland Security

Dear Mr. Ervin:

Thank you for your letter of June 16, 2004, in which you informed me of your interest in examining the financial situation at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) bureau. I am most appreciative that you share my concerns on the matter and have already begun to look at certain aspects as part of the department's 2004 financial audit.

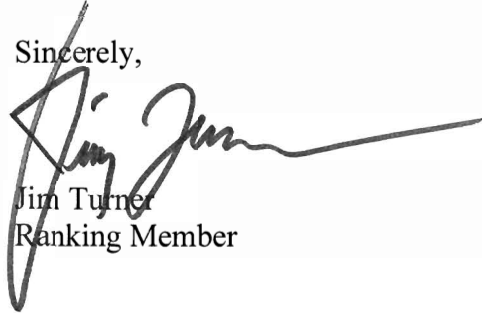
I wanted to take the opportunity to pass on additional information we received since knowledge of my initial letter to you became public. My staff has been flooded with correspondences from ICE staff expressing more problems about its overall budget and financial picture. Specifically, in these communications bureau staff noted that:

- Problems with the financial systems have resulted in some employees being paid overtime who do not qualify and some retirees remaining on the payroll and still receiving compensation.
- Some employees are going into their own pockets to pay expenses for official government relocation because the Travel Manager system takes an incredibly long time to get the required approvals on pending travel requests.
- Some staff must use their own money for legitimate expenses, such as gas for their official government vehicles, because credit cards have been deactivated by the card companies for lack of payment.
- Reports from the FFMS are inaccurate, confusing, frustrating to interpret and have limited usefulness because information cannot be broken down by object class code. The system is extremely slow and locks up frequently, especially in the afternoons when the entire country is using it.

On a related development, an article this week in Government Executive reported that ICE is releasing some criminal aliens from federal custody in the southern region because it cannot afford to detain them. The article also stated that other officials noted that ICE has to reduce the number of aliens it was holding to comply with budget limits.

Clearly, this new feedback from ICE staff and information contained in the article underscore the seriousness of this issue. My staff looks forward to meeting with you for further discussions about your review. You may contact Mr. John Sopko, General Counsel, at 226-8833 or Mr. Glenn Davis at 226-8851 in the meantime with questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jim Turner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jim Turner  
Ranking Member